

The Jungle Book - my own remake

by johnpatgillespie

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Summary: So, I just watched the new movie. Loved it of course, but this story is my own remake of the Jungle Book. Inspired by the new film, the Kipling stories and of course the Disney classic, I give you the slightly different story of Mowgli the mancub.

## 1. Many Strange Legends

Many strange legends are told of these Jungles of India. But none so strange as the story of a small boy named Mowgli. It all began one day, when the silence of the jungle was broken by an unfamiliar sound.

On this day, in the vines and leaves of the trees, a shadow crawled through the branches. It was Bagheera, the panther, black as night all over. Everybody knew Bagheera, and nobody cared to cross his path, for he was as cunning as a Jackal, as bold as a wild buffalo, and as reckless as a wounded elephant. But he had a voice as soft as wild honey dripping from a tree, and a skin softer than down.

As Bagheera slunk silently, a high-pitched noise caught him by ear. It appeared to be a screech, though it was not of any bird. Such a sound had never been heard before in the jungle. Bagheera turned, and followed the sound through the trees, eventually arriving at a river. On the river lay a shattered boat, with a small basket inside. The screaming sound bulged from the basket, as Bagheera went to see for himself. As the creature inside kicked its legs, Bagheera looked back in shock.

It was a mancub. All alone in the jungle. Bagheera scoffed. Had he known how deeply he was to be involved, he probably would have obeyed his first impulse and walked away. Yet, something stopped him from leaving. He stayed, and looked down at the gurgling mancub inside.

This mancub would have to have nourishment and soon. It was many days

travel to the nearest man-village, and without a mother's care, the child would soon perish. Bagheera thought to himself, and eventually, he had an idea.

A family of wolves nearby had been blessed with a litter of cubs. Bagheera took the basket in his mouth and brought him to where the family lay. Two of the cubs played together with a stick, as the others slept on top of their mother, Raksha. The loving mother got up and led her cubs inside. Now was the perfect opportunity for the panther. Checking to make sure he was alone, Bagheera crept over to the cave and left the basket on the ground, before running off into the bushes.

Bagheera turned and saw the basket, though the mancub made no sound. The panther, after checking a second time, crept over and nudged the basket, and suddenly...

\_WAAAAHHH!\_ the mancub wailed, as Bagheera ran back into the bushes. He looked over to see, as the wolves came outside to see the basket and the infant inside it. As the father wolf, Rama, came outside, he sniffed the basket suspiciously, looking up to his mate. Raksha smiled, as Rama looked into the basket and saw the mancub. Rama smiled at the infant, while Bagheera watched happily as Raksha took the basket in her teeth and led her cubs back inside.

## 2. The Peace Rock

Ten times the rains had come and gone. Bagheera would often visit the wolves to see how the mancub Mowgli was doing. He had become a beloved member of the pack. Bagheera himself had come to care for Mowgli as his own family. Yet, one day, he knew that Mowgli would have to return to his own kind.

One hot day, the animals of the jungle were gathered at the watering hole. For it was the final three days of the Water Truce. Each year when the dry season came, the Peace Rock would be revealed, and the animals could meet at this river in safety. On this day, the rock had almost submerged beneath the water.

Bagheera watched as Mowgli played with Grey, the youngest of the wolf pack, as Mowgli was on his back saying "oh, you got me, Grey. Good job, brother!"

Mowgli walked down to the river, where the other animals of the jungle had gathered. He grabbed a bowl made of leaves, that he himself had created, and cupped it into the water.

"Mowgli!" Rama said to get the boy's attention, as Mowgli said "yes, father?"

"Put it down, son. What did Akela say?"

Mowgli sighed and, having heard this before, said in sync with Rama \_"no more tricks, no more inventions. It's not the wolf way."\_-

"There's a good boy." Rama said as he went to Raksha, who said "Rama, you know he can't resist."

"I know. Believe me, it just tears me apart to talk to him like that. But he can't use those... contraptions, in the jungle. He must learn to live by the ways of the pack."

Suddenly, a ear-bursting roar echoed throughout the jungle. Bagheera looked up, sniffing as he sensed a familiar scent, as four vultures circled the sky above. "Impossible." Bagheera said. "Raksha! Rama! You must hide Mowgli at once!"

"Why? What is it?" Raksha asked.

"Shere Khan!" Bagheera snapped, before Rama said "Mowgli! Come here, now!"

"What's wrong?" Mowgli asked, before Raksha said "Mowgli, go with your father."

As Rama lead Mowgli behind a rock, a silhouette appeared in the sun above the Peace Rock. The figure slunk across the hilltop, the sun casting the creature in shadow as he walked down into the watering hole. The tiger looked around, his ruffled fur striped black over orange as the animals stepped back. He said "good morning, everyone. Bagheera, old friend."

"Shere Khan." Bagheera greeted as he nodded in respect. Shere Khan then turned to the animals and said "so, how is everyone on this lovely summer's morning? I sensed not much has changed since I've been gone. Though, I can't quite help but notice a strange odor today. I'm not sure what it might be. It seems... familiar?"

Mowgli hid behind the rock, his eyes looking at the tiger from across the river as he said "what is it now? Is it a wolf? No, a monkey? I hope not... why, it almost smells like a... like a mancub."

Shere Khan turned his head, seeing two small eyes pointing from behind a rock. The tiger growled and began to walk down to the river. As he reached the end, an old wolf stood on the rock in front of Mowgli. Shere Khan looked at the wolf, and said "Akela. What are you doing? Protecting one of... them."

"Mowgli belongs to my pack, Shere Khan."

"Mowgli? Then you've given it a name, have you? Forgive me for not being with the modern trends but... when exactly was it we came to adopt man into this jungle?"

"He is just a cub."

"And does my face not remind you of what a grown man can do?" Shere Khan said as he turned, revealing the left side of his face. The front of his nose was scarred, with a patch of fur missing from his burned flesh. His left eye was clouded, and sat lifelessly on his face. Shere Khan growled and said "it seems you only need to shift your hunting grounds for a few years, and soon everyone here forgets how our law works! Well, allow me to remind you. A mancub becomes man, and man is forbidden!"

"You will not have my cub!" Raksha said as she stood on the rock and growled. Shere Khan looked at her, saying "well. Raksha, the little demon. Ha ha, the last time I saw you, you yourself were practically

a cub. Oh, but look how you've grown. Dangerous. Violent. A force to be reckoned with. But I'm afraid I cannot allow your son here to inherit your traits."

"The boy does not know the ways of man, Shere Khan." Rama said. "He follows the Law of the Jungle, as any other animal would."

"Ha ha ha." Shere Khan laughed to himself, he crawled to the rock beside him. He said "you think that is my concern? You still think this is about what happened to me all those years ago? No, if the mancub stays here, he poses a threat that even he cannot stop!"

Bagheera looked down. He knew exactly what Shere Khan meant, as the tiger continued.

"There are some in this jungle who would do anything to get their hands on man's tools! Should this boy ever learn to create those tools, the jungle would be destroyed, and everyone in it! He cannot stay here, which is why we must kill the boy."

"You're wrong!" Bagheera said as he stepped down from the tree and walked towards the tiger. Shere Khan turned to Bagheera and growled, saying "so, you sacrifice yourself for him too?"

Raksha and Rama looked at Bagheera, who then said "you're wrong... and you're right. You're wrong, in that we don't have to kill the boy. But you are right, in that he must not stay here. He must... he must leave the jungle."

"My son is not going anywhere!" Raksha said. Shere Khan stepped back, and said "very well, Bagheera. Your reasoning and wisdom keeps the boy alive. But I won't wait forever. You have until the Peace Rock disappears to remove the boy from the jungle. Two sunrises... three sunsets... but if I return here on the third sunset, and the boy is not gone, I will destroy him."

Shere Khan looked at the boy's hiding place one last time, before walking up the hill and back into the jungle.

### 3. Council Rock

That night, the wolf pack elders met at Council Rock. Bagheera sat nearby on a tree, as Raksha and Rama waited at the bottom for the council. This meeting was to change Mowgli's entire future.

"We have no choice! For Shere Khan will kill the boy, and all who try to protect him!" Akela said. "Now, are we all in agreement as to what must be done?"

As the council came to agreement, Akela said "and now, it is my unpleasant duty to tell the boy's parents. Raksha, Rama, come over here please."

"Yes, Akela." Rama said as he and Raksha walked over. Akela said "I'm afraid the council has reached it's decision. The mancub can no longer stay with the pack. He must leave at once."

"Leave?" Rama said, as Akela added "I am sorry, my friend. But there

is no other way."

"But the mancub is... well... why, he's like my own son." Raksha said. "He cares for the cubs. He pulls thorns from our paws. Surely he's entitled to the pack's protection."

"But Raksha. Even the strength of the pack is no match for the tiger." Akela said. "And you already know the danger which Shere Khan speaks of."

"Yes, I know... but... the boy cannot survive alone in the jungle." Raksha said, before Bagheera climbed from the tree and said "Akela. Perhaps I can be of help."

"You, Bagheera? How?"

"I know of a man-village where the boy will be safe. Mowgli and I have taken many walks into the jungle together, so I'm sure he'll go with me."

"No, you can't possibly." Raksha said, before Bagheera answered "I was the one who brought him to you all those years ago... and now, I will be the one to deliver him to his own kind."

"I will go." a voice said. The wolves turned, seeing Mowgli sitting there. Rama said "son, have you thought about this?"

"Yes. And I don't wanna see anybody get hurt." Mowgli said.

"No. I won't let you go, Mowgli!" Raksha said. Akela said "Raksha, please."

"No! You have no right! He is my cub, and he always will be."

"Raksha." Rama said as he looked at Mowgli. "It's the only place where he'll be safe."

Akela said "so be it. Now, there's no time to lose. You must leave as soon as possible."

"Come along, mancub." Bagheera said. "We cannot have Shere Khan returning to find you here."

Mowgli smiled at his parents before following Bagheera. He suddenly turned back and ran to embrace them both. "I will miss you, father." Mowgli said, Rama adding "I... know. I know. But you... belong in the man-village. It's time you returned to your own kind."

Raksha looked hopelessly at Rama, before turning to Mowgli and saying "and never forget this, Mowgli. You are mine. Mine to me. No matter where you go or what they may call you. You will always be my son."

"I know. And you will always be my family." Mowgli said as he embraced his wolf mother, before turning away tearfully and joining Bagheera.

Raksha watched as Mowgli and Bagheera walked away, tears filling her eyes as she howled into the sky. Rama joined her briefly, before

turning away silently as Grey and the other cubs joined in. Mowgli turned to face them, waving as he and Bagheera disappeared from sight.

#### 4. Stampede

After a few hours of walking, Mowgli yawned and said "Bagheera. I'm getting a little sleepy. Shouldn't we wait till tomorrow."

"Time is of the essence, mancub. This jungle is not safe for you anymore. You're sought after by someone I hope you never to meet. And because of that, you're being hunted by a tiger as well! Now, come on. We'll sleep here. Things will look better in the morning."

After finding a tree to hide in, Bagheera sat on the branch, saying to Mowgli "now, get some sleep. We've got a long journey ahead of us tomorrow."

"But Bagheera. Can't I just stay in the jungle?"

"Pah. You wouldn't last one day. Now, for the last time, go to sleep."

As morning came, Mowgli and Bagheera continued through the jungle. Mowgli said "why doesn't the tiger trust me anyway, Bagheera? Can't we just explain to him that I'd never hurt anyone?"

"Nonsense, Mowgli. No one explains anything to Shere Khan. As they reached a sunlit canopy, Bagheera heard thundering footsteps and a trumpet sound, as voices said "Hup! Two! Three! Four! Keep it up! Two! Three! Four!"

Bagheera said "come along, mancub." as they reached a path, Mowgli looking to his left to see a parade of elephants marching through the jungle. The elephant at the front held a branch in his trunk, saying "keep it up, troopers! Company! Sound off!"

The elephants chanted to themselves. \_"Oh, the aim of our patrol... is a question rather droll... for to march and drill, over field and hill... \_Hup! Two! Three! Four!\_.. is a military goal... it's a military goal!"\_

"Bagheera." Mowgli said. "Is that a parade?"

"No. It's the dawn patrol. Bow your head, mancub."

Bagheera bowed as the elephants passed, Mowgli joining him on the ground. A young elephant looked down at Mowgli and smiled, before it's mother led it away saying "come dear. We don't want you getting lost."

As the elephants left, Mowgli and Bagheera continued on their journey. Mowgli asked "Bagheera, why were we bowing?"

"They may seem a little eccentric, Mowgli, but the elephants are ancient, noble creatures. They built everything that belongs in the jungle, and they will protect and preserve it for all time. Now, come along."

After a while, they came into a forest. Bagheera said "you must be hungry, mancub. Come, we'll eat here."

Bagheera climbed a tree to get some food for Mowgli, as Mowgli waited for him at the bottom of the tree. Mowgli sat and waited, looking where Bagheera was. Suddenly, a small pebble hit him on the head. Mowgli turned to see a small grey langur laughing at him. Mowgli said "hello? What's your name?"

The langur turned and ran away, Mowgli chasing it and saying "hey, where are you going? Come back here."

Mowgli chased the langur across the jungle as other monkeys began watching from the trees. The langur stopped at a rock, as Mowgli pounced and said "gotcha!"

The monkey jumped up, dodging Mowgli who gripped the rock to avoid falling off of the steep cliff behind it. At the bottom of the cliff was a small ravine, where hundreds of buffalo stood peacefully. Mowgli struggled to hang onto the rock, as the langur laughed and stepped on Mowgli's fingers, causing the mancub to lose his grip slightly. Mowgli tried to hang on, before the langur cupped his face and laughed. Mowgli laughed as well, before the monkey spat in his face, causing Mowgli to let go of the rock and fall into the ravine. Mowgli landed in the ravine, startling the buffalo and causing them to panic.

Bagheera climbed down the tree and said "Mowgli? Where are you? Now is not the time for hide-and-seek, mancub."

Suddenly, a loud scream said "HELP!", prompting Bagheera to run to the cliff edge, seeing Mowgli in the stampede. He yelled "Mowgli! Hold on! I'm coming!"

Bagheera carefully climbed down the cliff, as Mowgli climbed onto a rock to avoid being trampled. Bagheera said to him "MOWGLI! WATCH OUT!" as a buffalo ran past, Mowgli falling onto it and holding on for dear life. Bagheera was forced to climb away from the stampede, looking across to see Mowgli be carried away. He yelled "MOWGLI!" as the herd disappeared from sight.

The monkeys returned to their home, an ancient temple long forgotten by man, and climbed into the dark room. They scampered across the long hallways of the temple, stopping to see a large figure in the dark. The figure said "you lost the boy? AARRGGHH! This is the last time you fail me, you hear what I'm saying? Now, go get me that boy before he reaches the man-village! I want a word with him! What are you standing around here for? GO!"

The monkeys ran out of the temple to find Mowgli.

## 5. Kaa

Mowgli held onto the buffalo's horns as the herd stampeded past a fast-flowing river. When they reached a tight turn, Mowgli was thrown off of the buffalo and landed hard in the river. He struggled for air as the waves carried him far off, fighting the powerful current as he reached the surface. A small wooden raft was also carried by the river, as Mowgli gripped it and climbed on top of it. Mowgli breathed

heavily as he rested on the raft.

What seemed like hours passed, when Mowgli felt something blunt hit his head, waking him up on the raft. He saw that he was on land, though he couldn't recognize where he was. The place he was in was foggy, and dark. He walked into a large, vine-covered tree, eventually finding himself in the center of it. He shouted "hello? Is anyone there?"

When no one answered, Mowgli repeated himself. "HELLO!"

Still without an answer, Mowgli sat on the tree silently. He thought about his home, his pack, his mother, and Bagheera. He longed to be home, in the jungle. He was about to leave, when suddenly...

\_ "Hello." \_

Mowgli stopped, listening to the silence. He said "hello." as the voice answered \_ "are you alone out here?" \_

"Yes. But I won't be long. I'm lost. I want to go home."

\_ "Yeah. Yeah, we all belong in our homessssss. But the home you want isss not where you belong, issss it?" \_ the honey-sweet voice said.\_ "What are you doing sssso deep in the jungle anyway?" \_

"I'm going to the man-village." Mowgli answered, before the voice said \_ "oh yes. Now I remember. You're the mancub." \_

"Who are you?" Mowlgi asked, turning around to face the large eyes of a python. The python slithered her tongue and said \_ "I am Kaa. The ssssecret of the tree. The living vine. Don't you know what you are?" \_

"I am Mowgli. The son of Raksha and Rama." Mowgli answered, before Kaa slithered forward, her eyes becoming multicolored. Mowgli suddenly became dizzy and fell back, before Kaa caught him in her coils.

\_ "Hm-hm. Well, I know what you really are. And I know where you came from. Would you like to sssee?" \_

"Yes." Mowgli said, influenced by the hypnotic gaze of Kaa's eyes. Unbeknownst to either of them, someone was watching them from behind the tree. As Mowgli was caught in his trance, he saw a bright red light. Holding the red light was a creature like him, wearing strange clothes. Kaa said \_ "mossst men like to ssstay in their village. But sssometimesss, they travel." \_

Mowgli saw the man holding a small bundle, which he lay in a basket. The red light was visible through all the trees, drawing the attention of a four-legged creature. Kaa continued \_ "and when they travel... their cavesss breathe in the dark..." \_

The red light burst into flames which licked up and down violently. Kaa said \_ "they call it the Red Flower..." \_

Mowgli then saw animals running for cover as the Red Flower spread, burning trees and reducing all around it to dust. \_ "It bringsss warmth... and light... and dessssstruction to all that it touchessss." \_

The man held the Red Flower in his hands as he looked at the bundle, which looked like a small mancub wrapped in red blankets. Mowgli said "who is that?"

"The traveler protecting hisss cub." Kaa hissed, as Mowgli saw two glowing eyes behind the man. A flash of black and red appeared, and the man fell down. Kaa said "the man vanisssshed from the jungle that night, but the currentsss of fate and water carried the cub away."

Mowgli saw the boat on which the basket lay, floating down the river and crashing against a rock. The mancub inside it began screaming as the sun rose. "What happened to him?" Mowgli asked, Kaa answering "the cub wasss found by a panther. And raisssed by a caring family of wolvesss. And that cub... wasss you."

The imagery of the cub being found by a panther disappeared, as Mowgli was still in a deep trance. "And now, you are being told to leave." Kaa said. "Yes... I am." Mowgli answered slowly.

"But you don't have to go. I can keep you sssafe. You can ssstay right here."

"Okay..." Mowgli said as he slowly lost consciousness. "Good..." Kaa said as she wrapped her coils around Mowgli like a hostage. "I'll keep you clossse. Let go of your fear now..."

As she opened her mouth and licked her lips, she brought Mowgli closer, before saying "And trussssssst... in me..."

Kaa opened her jaw, ready to swallow Mowgli whole, when suddenly...

CRASH! the tree collapsed as a large roaring shadow grabbed Kaa and pulled, releasing the unconscious Mowgli from her coils. Kaa hissed at the large figure, which swung down it's mighty paw to slap Kaa to the ground. The shadow picked up Mowgli and carried him away.

## 6. Baloo's Cave

Bagheera followed the trail of the buffalo, keeping to Mowgli's scent. Eventually, the scent stopped, Bagheera saying "no. How can this be?", before turning to see the river, and saying "oh, I hope you're alright, Mowgli."

\* \* \*

><p>Meanwhile, Mowgli woke up. He was in another strange place. Though, this place seemed to be a cave of sorts, and was much brighter and warmer than Kaa's tree.</p>

Where am I\_, he thought to himself as he stood up. He looked around the cave, suddenly seeing large claw marks on the rock behind him, before looking down to see claw marks everywhere on the ground.

Oh no. This must be Shere Khan's cave\_, Mowgli thought. Suddenly, thundering footsteps came from outside the cave, as Mowgli looked at the shadow cast on a nearby rock. The figure looked large and

intimidating, as Mowgli landed on the floor, before closing his eyes and dropping on the ground, holding his breath to appear dead.

He heard the footprints as the creature stood outside the cave, as the growling became closer and closer. Though Mowgli kept his eyes closed, he heard the creature come in, though his voice didn't sound like Shere Khan's voice. This voice was calm, and laid-back, as it sang \_"well, it's a doo-ba-dee-doo. Yes, it's a doo-ba-dee-doo. I mean a doo-bee, doo-bee, doo-bee, doo-bee, doo-ba-dee-doo.\_"

Mowgli opened his eyes slightly, trying to get a glimpse of the creature. He saw large brown fur facing away from him, as the creature hummed to itself. Mowgli moved his hand slightly, accidentally knocking a pebble.

The creature's ears pricked up, and Mowgli quickly closed his eyes again. When he opened them a second time, he saw a large, black nose in his face, sniffing his hair loudly.

"AAAGGHH! GET BACK! HELP!" Mowgli screamed as he clambered to his feet. Mowgli turned and went to escape, only to run straight into the wall. Feeling cornered, he grabbed a stick and prepared to defend himself.

"Get back! I mean it!" Mowgli said as he shut his eyes tight and pointed the stick, only for the voice to say "whoa. Calm down, little britches. No need to get worked up, okay kid?"

Mowgli opened his eyes to see the large, sleepy brown bear who wiped his mouth and sat on his bottom. The bear said "sorry for scaring ya, but I just wanted to make sure you were still kicking, know what I mean? And by the way, I'm feeling really threatened by that tiny stick you're holding right now."

"Where am I?" Mowgli said as he sat on the ground. The bear yawned and said "uh, this is a cave, it's my cave."

Mowgli looked in confusion, as the bear said "you uh... you don't remember what happened, do you?"

"Uh... no."

"Well, for starters, I saved your life. I tell you, just walking by one day, minding my own business when hear a hissing sound and see a mancub being eaten by a snake. And myself being one to make my contributions to society and all, I rushed in there without hesitation to whisk you to safety."

"Well, thanks." Mowgli said. The bear scratched an itch on his stomach and said "so, what do they call you kid?"

"I'm Mowgli."

"Mowgli, huh? Where are you going to, then?

"I'm going to a man-village."

"The man-village? Bad idea, you can't go there. It's not worth it. Real boring place, believe me. Everybody works, and nobody plays."

"Well, I have to go. Bagheera said I'm not safe in the jungle."

"Ha ha, not safe. Well, you just stick with old Baloo here. You'll be fine."

"Really?"

"Sure. And besides, you can't leave yet."

"Why not?"

"Cause you've got to help me."

"With what?"

"I'm getting ready for uh... hibernation." Baloo said as he yawned loudly. "I need to get my winter supply ready. And you still owe me one after I snatched ya from the jaws of... well actually, the coils of death back there."

"Okay, I'll help you, Baloo. Where is your food?"

"That's what you're helping me with, isn't it?"

## 7. The Bare Necessities

Baloo lead Mowgli into the jungle as they went to get food. Mowgli said "I've never met a bear before. What do you eat for hibernation?"

"Well, I'm not looking for the finest meals. All I need is the basics. We bears have very simple needs. I even have a little tune that helps me to remember that."

As they walked on, Baloo began humming to himself. \_"Hm-hm-hmm... dum-de-dum-de-dum. Bum-bum-bum dum-de-dum-de-dum... forget about your worries and your strife.\_"

"What's that?" Mowgli asked, Baloo answering "that's a song about the good life, little britches."

"What's a song?"

"What's a song? You've never heard a song before. It's a rhyme that you sing with a rhythm, if you know what I mean."

"Oh yeah. My wolf family has one of those. It goes like this: \_this is the Law of the Jungle, as old and as true as the sky. The Wolf that keeps it may prosper, but the Wolf that breaks it will die.\_"

"That ain't a song kid. That's just boring old rules that those night-howlers say to themselves. Now, let's go get me some hibernation food."

"So, how do you find your simple needs?"

"Well, it's like this, little britches. All you gotta do is..." Baloo

said as he clapped his paws. "Look for the... bare necessities. The simple bare necessities. Forget about your worries and your strife. I mean the bare necessities. Old Mother Nature's recipes, that bring the bare necessities of life!"

Eventually, they came to a tree, where a hive of bees stood on a branch. Baloo sang "wherever I wander... wherever I roam... I couldn't be fonder of my big home..."

"What about there?" Mowgli said as he pointed to the hive. Baloo said "sounds like the bees are buzzin' in the tree to make some honey just for me. Can you climb that?"

"Sure." Mowgli said as he climbed up the tree. Baloo said "watch out for the stinging bits. They really don't feel good."

"Ow!" Mowgli said as he was stung, before kicking the hive and causing some honey to fall from the tree and into a small rock-plate.

Mowgli then had an idea, as he went down to get a long, ridged leave, which he then sharpened into a machete. He then made a basket with some leaves and used a vine to move it under the hive. Baloo watched in awe as Mowgli then used the leaf to reach over to the hive and cut down some honey sap in the basket. When he brought it back down, Baloo picked up the basket and said "now that's how you get honey! Ha ha... well now, what have we here?" as he saw a rock on the ground.

He lifted the rock up, revealing thousands of ants crawling about. Baloo sang to himself "when you look under the rocks and plants and take a glance at the fancy ants." before licking up a handful of the ants and saying "then maybe try a few..."

"You eat ants too?" Mowgli said, as Baloo licked his lips and said "yep, and you'd better believe it. And you're gonna love the way they tickle y'inside."

Baloo led Mowgli onward, singing "the bare necessities of life will come to you."

"But when?"

"They'll come to you!"

Eventually, they came to a field filled with plants and fruits. Baloo picked fruits for Mowgli to place in the plate as he sang "look for the bare necessities, the simple bare necessities. Forget about your worries and your strife. I mean the bare necessities. That's why a bear can rest at ease with just the bare necessities of life!"

Mowgli tried to pick one of the prickly fruits, hurting his hand as he said "ouch!"

"Now when you pick a pawpaw, or a prickly pear. And you prick a raw paw, well next time beware!" Baloo sang as he picked several fruits on his claws and Mowgli used a stick to pick the fruits. Baloo sang "don't pick the prickly pear by the paw. When you pick a pear try to use the claw."

Mowgli climbed a nearby tree to get some large soft fruits, as Baloo said \_"ah, but you don't need to use the claw when you pick a pair of the big pawpaw. Have I given you a clue?"\_

"Yeah. Thanks Baloo!"

Baloo walked onwards, as Mowgli climbed onto the bear's back and held the plate filled with honey and fruits. Baloo said \_"the bare necessities of life will come to you!"\_

"They'll come to me!"

\_ "They'll come to you!"\_

When they came to a river, Mowgli swam in the river to catch fish. He said "how many fish do you want?"

"Enough to fill up the plate!" Baloo answered as he tried to scratch an itch on his back. "Ah, come on now! Ugh, no use." Baloo said, before he saw a tree and scratched his back against it. He said "oh yeah. That's the spot. Ha ha... beautiful. Little to the left, oh that's it!"

Mowgli struggled to catch the fish, which slipped from his hands and back into the river. The mancub then had another idea, as he fashioned a grappling hook and a net made of vines. He tossed the hook across the river, using the raised net to trap the fish inside of it.

Mowgli eventually held several dozen fish in the net as he rested on a rock. Finally, Baloo finished scratching, and said "oh man, this is really living."

Baloo fell into the river, floating on his back down the current. As he passed Mowgli, the mancub climbed onto his belly, using Baloo as a float. As they both laughed, Baloo said "hey Mowgli."

"Yeah Baloo?"

"Do you... like it here?"

"I sure do."

"Then, how about you don't go to the man-village."

"But Bagheera said that I-"

"Don't worry about Baggy. I know that guy, you don't need to listen."

"Well, I don't know. But they all seem really worried about me staying. And besides, I can't do my tricks in the jungle."

"Tricks? You mean your inventions? But they're great."

"It's not the wolf way."

"Of course it's not. It's the Mowgli way." Baloo thought for a moment, before sighing and saying "alright, little britches. How

about this? Once we drop all this off at my cave, you can make your mind up. And if you got your heart set on it, I'll take you there myself."

"Okay Baloo." Mowgli said. Baloo smiled as he saw a bee buzzing by, and sang \_"So just try and relax, yeah. Cool it... just fall apart in my backyard. Because let me tell you something, little britches... If you act like that bee acts, uh uh, then you're working too hard. And don't spend your time lookin' around... for something you want that... can't be found.\_"

When they floated over a small waterfall, Baloo laughed and sang \_"cause when you find out you can live without it and go along not thinkin' about it, I'll tell you something true.\_"

"What's that?"

"\_The bare necessities of life will come to you!\_ Ha ha! Hey kid, why don't you give it a go?"

As they floated down the stream, they both sang \_"look for the bare necessities, the simple bare necessities. Forget about your worries and your strife. I mean the bare necessities. That's why a bear can rest at ease with just the bare necessities of life!"\_

Baloo said\_ "with just the bare necessities of life!" \_as Mowgli said "yeah man!"

## 8. Raksha's Quest

Meanwhile, at Council Rock, Raksha looked in the direction that Mowgli and Bagheera had gone. Grey crept over and sat next to her silently, and said "Mama?"

"Yes, child?"

"When is Mowgli coming back?"

"Mowgli is... never returning, dear." Raksha said, on the edge of tears, before turning and seeing Rama looking at something. She walked over to her mate, saying "Rama, are you alright."

She saw what Rama was holding, revealing several small inventions and contraptions that Mowgli had made over the years.

Rama said "I just sent him away... I never even told him that I loved him."

"He knew, Rama. We all did."

"Did he really?" Rama said. "All these... tricks. I always said, it's not the wolf way, but now... it's all we have left of him."

Suddenly, Akela howled into the sky. Raksha turned and said "what is it?"

Akela stepped down from the rock, followed by a small, skinny jackal.

"What is your business here, parasite?" Rama said, before the jackal answered "I wouldn't be so rude if I were to learn more about my mancub's predicament."

"Mowgli's in trouble?" Rama asked, prompting Raksha and Grey to walk over. The jackal said "well, ha ha, you could say that. Last I heard, he was lost in a stampede. He could be anywhere in the jungle."

Raksha thought for a moment, before running back to her den.

Rama followed his mate to the den, seeing Raksha looking at her sleeping cubs as she lay Grey down as well. Raksha sighed and said "I'm going to find Mowgli. If he will not make it to the man-village, then I will bring him here myself."

"But Shere Khan..."

"Will not come between me and my son! It's my intuition."

"You cannot go alone." Rama said. "The strength of the pack is the wolf and the strength of the wolf is the pack, remember?"

"But I cannot leave my cubs unprotected." Raksha said. "Which is why you must stay."

Rama nuzzled Raksha, saying "I do not wish to argue with you. But if you find our son, bring him home, so I can see him one last time."

"I will."

As Raksha left, she was watched from a tree by Shere Khan, who said "so, the mancub is lost? Well, I'll just have to remedy that."

Baloo and Mowgli returned to the cave, as Mowgli began to build more contraptions. Baloo said "so, you made up your mind yet, kid?"

Mowgli thought for a moment and said "well, they said I couldn't go home, but I don't like the sound of the man-village either. So, I think I'll stay here with you Baloo."

"Well, I don't think you will." a voice said as a figure entered the cave.

"Bagheera! It's you!" Mowgli said as he ran to embrace the panther. "I'm so glad I found you Mowgli, though I wish maybe you'd end up with someone more trustworthy."

"Like who? A mongoose? Ha ha. There may be better, but there's definitely worse, Baggy." Baloo laughed.

"Right yes. Come on Mowgli. Let's be on our way."

"But I can't leave now. I'm helping Baloo get ready for hibernation. See, I've built some things to help him."

Mowgli pulled down a curtain to reveal the contraptions he had made.

A large hammock hung over the entrance, with several plates of food attached to ropes.

"What do you think?" Mowgli said. Bagheera watched in awe, saying "Mowgli... have you lost your mind?!"

"What, I'm only trying to..."

"Have you not been listening to anything Akela has told you. What Rama has told you? For goodness' sake, mancub. There's no place in the jungle for your... tricks! So, if you want to do this, you do this in the man-village, you hear?"

"But Baloo needs to hibernate comfortably."

"Bears don't hibernate in the jungle, Mowgli. What have you been teaching him?!"

Mowgli looked at Baloo, who shrugged and said "well, not full hibernation, but I do nap. Quite a lot!"

Bagheera rolled his eyes and groaned, before saying "now come on. You're going back to that man-village right now!"

"But Bagheera..."

"No Mowlgi! You only have two days left! If we leave now, we'll get there before tomorrow's sundown."

"Baggy, Mowgli already decided he wants to stay here." Baloo said once he finished swallowing some honey.

Bagheera turned to face Baloo, a violent fury in his eyes, before suddenly becoming calm and collected as he turned to Mowgli and said "wait out there, mancub."

As Mowgli went outside, Bagheera suddenly snapped "Baloo, you cannot keep Mowgli in this jungle!"

"Aw, come on Baggy, what's the point." Baloo said as he rested on the hammock. "You can't take him back to the man-village. They'll ruin him there. Make a man out of him."

"It's safer than him staying here. The jungle is not the place for him."

"I grew up in the jungle. Take a look at me."

"Yes, just look at yourself. Living like a recluse in a dirty cave."

"Well, you're not a basket of fruit yourself, Baggy. The mancub's fine with me. I'll love him like one of my own."

"Baloo. Birds of a feather must flock together.. you wouldn't mate with a panther, would you?"

"Hey, you gotta take me to dinner first, buddy."

"And furthermore Baloo, Mowgli seems to have man's ability to get

into trouble."

"Ah, stop worrying, okay, just stop. I'll take care of him."

"Baloo, there are those out there who are after Mowgli. And if he doesn't leave soon, Mowgli will cross paths with Shere Khan."

Mowgli waited outside the cave, when suddenly, a small flash of bright fur caught his eye. Suddenly, the langur he met earlier jumped down at him. Mowgli said "you again?!"

The monkey looked up and nodded. Mowgli looked in the same direction, only for several hairy arms to hoist him up into the trees.

"Shere Khan? The tiger? What's his beef with the kid?" Baloo said.

"He hates man, and he will do anything to keep man's influence out of the jungle."

"But Mowgli doesn't have those things."

"And Shere Khan cannot wait until he does. And neither can we. If Mowgli learns to control the Red Flower, the jungle will be finished."

"Well, I love that kid. He's special."

"I know he's special, Baloo. I raised him. I've protected him since he was a cub. But I can't do that anymore, so now, I will return him to where he belongs."

Baloo sighed, and said "alright. Okay, come on, we'll go talk to him now."

Bagheera and Baloo walked outside the cave, as Baloo said "Mowgli? Little britches?"

"Baloo! Bagheera! Help me!" Mowgli shouted from the trees as the monkeys swung from vine to vine, branch to branch, passing Mowgli forwards between them.

"Hey, come back here with that cub!" Baloo shouted as Mowgli was carried away. The monkeys began pelting them both with fruits and leaves, as one of the monkeys said "there's some food for hibernation! Ha ha ha!"

Baloo jumped up to grab Mowgli, only for the monkeys to lift their arms up, causing Baloo to fall into a shallow stream as Mowgli was carried away.

Bagheera looked where Mowgli had gone, looking down at Baloo and saying "I knew he wasn't safe with you!"

"Can't a guy make one mistake?"

"No, not in the jungle! Now, I will find that boy and you will return to your cave!"

"No!"

"Baloo, I will not argue about this with you!"

"Whether or not you want my help, I'm going to help. Because if anything happens to that little guy, I'll never forgive myself."

Bagheera thought for a moment, saying "come on, then. They're taking him to the ancient ruins. The fate of the jungle depends on us saving him from that king of theirs."

## 9. A Friend For Dinner

Raksha followed Mowgli's scent, and eventually came to a fallen tree, shrouded in fog and vines. She called "Mowgli! Are you there? This is your mother!"

She had always been fearful around foggy trees. Whenever she saw one, it was practically guaranteed that it would be unsafe. As she thought about this, she sniffed a familiar scent, though it was not Mowgli.

She heard slithering in the vines, but she could not sense where it came from. As she turned around trying to track the sound, the scent became closer and closer.

\_ "Good afternoon, Rakssssha." \_ a voice hissed. \_ "You're looking nicssse on this fine day." \_

Raksha growled as she prepared to defend herself. \_ "Yesssss. You're looking good... what are you doing in my neck of the woodssss?" \_

Raksha turned and pinned the python down, saying "Kaa. I should've known you'd be behind this!"

\_ "Why are you sssso tenssse?" \_

"I'm looking for my boy."

\_ "Oh yesssss. The mancub. He came by here not a day ago. He wasss very lossst." \_

Raksha pressed her claws further into Kaa's neck, the python gasping for air as the wolf said "I swear, if you have harmed my son, you will suffer pain unlike any you've ever imaginied!"

Kaa said \_ "ssso it ssseemss." \_ as she slowly wrapped her coils around Raksha's tail and waist, using the tip of her body to run like a finger down the wolf's spine seductively. Raksha tensed as she felt this contact, as Kaa continued \_ "But you need not worry about me. The bear took the mancub from my coilsss. I sssenssse he is now in the possssesssion of the monkeys." \_

"The ancient ruins. I must go at once." Raksha said, unable to move as Kaa's coils trapped her body. Kaa moved her head closer, saying \_ "oh, but you mussst be tired. And hungry." \_

"Kaa, no!" Raksha said, before the snake's eyes became multicolored.

Raksha looked away, as Kaa said \_"just relaxsssss. You'll be perfectly sssafe here."\_

"Kaa, I mean it. Please, don't." Raksha said fearfully as she was brought closer to the python's face. Kaa said\_ "I was jussst about to have a sssnack, and I would be honored if you would join me."\_

Kaa brought Raksha closer as she used her forked tongue to slowly lick the side of Raksha's face. "Enough!" Raksha said as she used her free paw to claw Kaa's face.

As Kaa winced back in pain, her coils released Raksha as the wolf ran out of the tree. Suddenly, she was tugged to the ground and screamed as she was dragged back by her hind legs. Kaa said \_"where do you think you're going!"\_

"Kaa, please! Stop. No!" Raksha said, whimpering and trying to crawl away as Kaa slowly pressed her closer. Kaa pressed her nose to Raksha's fur and inhaled it's scent, groaning in satisfaction as Raksha cried in disgust, before Kaa said \_"hmm. You have a beautiful fragrancssse, you know."\_

Raksha snapped her jaws at Kaa, before Kaa wrapped her coils around her mouth, saying \_"ooh, you're feissssty. I like that."\_

Raksha shook her head as she struggled to free herself from Kaa's coils. Kaa said \_"oh yesss. Keep doing that. Keep ssstruggling. I'm gonna open your mouth so you can ssscream again. I know you can. Come on, honey. Ssscream like a monkey. Ssscream!"\_

Raksha's mouth was unclamped as Kaa's tail slithered slowly down her face. Raksha screamed quietly, as Kaa tightened her tail around the wolf's neck, saying \_"ssscalarm louder! I want to hear you sssuffering!"\_

Raksha bit her lips together as her eyes filled with tears. As Kaa came closer, Raksha said "no. Stop! Please, Kaa. Don't. AAAAHHHH!"

\_ "Yesss. Yesss! Ssscream for me now! Sscream!"\_

Suddenly, a small creature jumped onto Kaa and bit into her spine, Kaa hissing in pain as she released Raksha and hit her head on the branch. Kaa groaned and said \_"aarrgghh! My sssinuss!"\_ before she turned to see Grey on her tail, taking bites out of her flesh. Kaa hissed and said \_"you hairy little brat! I will have you both in my coilsss!"\_

Grey ran past Kaa as he helped Raksha to her feet, before Raksha slapped Kaa and knocked her down. Raksha picked up Grey in her mouth and carried him from the tree. Kaa looked where they had gone, smiling as she licked the blood from her face and said \_"sssome other time, perhapssss."\_

Once Raksha and Grey were within a mile from Kaa's tree, Raksha said "Grey, why are you here! I told your father to take care of you all!"

"I want to find Mowgli, mama!"

"It's not safe out here son. I cannot lose two of my children."

Raksha looked back. She sighed and said "Fine. Come on then. It's too late to take you home."

Her heart filled with the frustration from her cub's recklessness and the humiliation from her treatment at the coils of the snake, the mother wolf groaned and carried her son on her back as they ventured into the jungle.

## 10. King Louie's Palace

Meanwhile, the monkeys brought Mowgli up a large cliff, eventually coming to their hideout. Mowgli looked in shock as he saw the large, ruined temple, seeing more monkeys leading him inside. Eventually, he came to the center of the dark temple, seeing a throne covered in fruits and gold. A voice said "so, you're the mancub. CRAZY!"

"Who are you?"

"You hungry kid? Have a banana." the voice said. Suddenly, out of the darkness, a massive arm, covered in long, orange hairs reached at the large pile of fruit and gold and pulled out a banana, which he dropped into Mowgli's hand.

Mowgli said "show your face."

"Okay." the voice said. Out of the shadows, a large ape stepped out. His face was almost human-like, and he had shaggy orange hairs over his grey body. He said "I am the king of the Bandar-Log. But you can call me... Louie."

"Louie."

"Yes, indeed. And you are the mancub who wants to stay in the jungle."

"How do you know that?"

"Kid. I got ears, and my ears got ears. Word passes quickly here. I hear you're having trouble with Shere Khan."

"Kind of."

"But you wanna live here?"

"I'll do anything to stay in the jungle."

"Good. And old King Louie, that's me by the way, can fix it for you. But I got a price for protection, y'hear?"

"What price?"

"Take a look around, kid. I'm sitting on an ancient throne. I got all the gold and food I could ask for. I'm the king of the swingers and the jungle VIP, see? But, when I reached the top, I had to stop. But you can fix this for me."

"How?"

"We make a deal, boy. I protect you from the tiger, but here's your part of the deal, cousin." Louie said as he leaned in, and pressed his ear open. "Lay the secret on me of man's Red Flower."

"But Louie, I don't know how to make the Red Flower."

Louie laughed as the monkeys joined in, before silencing them with "what's so funny!?"

He turned to Mowgli, saying "now, don't try to fool around here, kiddo. This jungle's one dangerous place for your kind. Only I... can protect ya. Now, I won't ask you's again: tell me the secret of the Red Flower."

"What do you want it for, anyway?"

"Because I wanna be like you! But if I'm gonna do that, then I need the power of man's Red Flower, see?"

Baloo and Bagheera listened from outside the temple, Baloo heard this and said "the Red Flower. We're too late, Baggy."

"No. Mowgli doesn't know how to make the Red Flower. Louie will kill him if we don't save him. Now, while you distract the monkeys, I'll rescue Mowgli. You got that?"

"Solid gone, man!" Baloo responded. Back in the temple, Louie said "that's it. I've run out of patience. One more time, in case your ears aren't workin' all too well. How can I make the Red Flower!?"

"HEY!" a voice said. The monkeys turned to the entrance, when Mowgli said "Baloo?"

"How's it goin' little britches. Just wanted to make sure I was in the right monkey temple."

"Who are you!?" Louie asked, Baloo answering "me? Just a lazy old bear looking for somewhere to party till dawn. It's okay though, I know the kid, so that's like a backstage pass, right!?"

As Mowgli saw Baloo and Louie talk, a voice said "mancub." as Bagheera sneaked in from the back window. Mowgli whispered "Bagheera." as the panther said "this way. Hurry."

Louie said "throw this bear out of here! Now, mancub, about that Red Flow-where is he!?"

Baloo said "well, I better go. Thanks, bye-bye!" as he ran out of the temple. Louie smashed through the entrance after him, seeing Bagheera and Mowgli running out the other way. Bagheera stood by Baloo and said "Mowgli, run! We'll handle this!"

Mowgli climbed up the steps into the other temple as Louie said "seize them! The mancub is mine!"

As the monkeys surrounded Baloo and Bagheera, Louie swung over to the temple and broke through the door. The room was pitch black, save for

the light of the windows. Louie said "I know you're in here, mancub. I can protect you, you know. Shere Khan fears fire ever since he was scarred by it. Why don't we take him down together?"

Louie heard footsteps on the top level, as Mowgli ran across a pillar and hid in the other room. Mowgli stood silently, looking around for a way to escape. He saw a window just in front of him down a hallway.

Meanwhile, the monkeys attacked Baloo and Bagheera, as Baloo stood on his hind legs and let out a mighty roar. This frightened the monkeys for a moment, before they continued their attack and knocked Baloo down.

In the temple, Mowgli stepped towards the temple, before the floor suddenly burst open beneath him as Louie said "there you are!"

Mowgli ran as fast as he could until he reached the window. He looked outside it, seeing some soft ground at the bottom. Seeing Louie reaching towards him, Mowgli leaped from the window as Louie's hand was inches away. Louie clenched his fist, failing to grab Mowgli who landed on the soft ground, before Louie's momentum crashed into the wall.

Bagheera, Baloo and the monkeys watched as the temple collapsed, trapping Louie inside as Mowgli avoided all of the falling rocks and rubble. Baloo grabbed Mowgli and Bagheera said "come on. We've got to get out of here!"

As they ran from the temple, the rocks fell everywhere. When the dust finally settled, the monkeys screeched loudly in fear as they searched the ruins for their trapped king. When they were far enough away, Bagheera said "are you alright, mancub?"

"Yes, I'm fine." Mowgli said, as Baloo smiled and said "that's great. But I gotta admit that was one swinging party!"

## 11. Decisions

The trio returned to Baloo's cave as the sun began to set, when Baloo said "so, who's hungry? I still have my nap-snacks. You eat fish, don't you Baggy?"

"Of course." Bagheera said, before seeing shadows from inside the cave, saying "wait! Someone's in there."

"Stay back, kid." Baloo said as he and Bagheera entered the cave, only to see the food being eaten ravenously. Baloo said "whoa, whoa, whoa! What are you doing?"

"I apologize, Baloo." Raksha said as Grey tried to eat the fish. "We have been travelling all day. We needed to rest. We're looking for our-"

"Mother?" Mowgli said as he entered. Raksha and Grey smiled as Raksha said "my son. My dear, boy. Thank goodness you're safe."

Bagheera and Baloo smiled as Mowgli embraced his mother and brother,

before Mowgli said "why are you here?"

"We came to look for you." Grey said. "We were told that you were lost."

"I'm not lost anymore." Mowgli said. "I've been staying here with Baloo."

"You're welcome, by the way." Baloo said as he smiled. Raksha said "thank you, Baloo. Now, Mowgli, we're going to bring you home. To the pack."

"But Shere Khan.."

"You don't worry about him, dear. The strength of the wolf is the pack, remember?" Raksha answered, before Mowgli said "well, Baloo told me that I could stay here with him, so Shere Khan cannot find me. Right, Baloo?"

Baloo tried to answer, before Bagheera glared at him sternly. Baloo sighed and said "Mowgli... maybe it's better for you to go to the man-village."

"What?" Mowgli said, before Baloo answered "well uh... hey Mowgli, you wouldn't marry a panther would you?" as Bagheera buried his face in his paws and said "oh dear."

"What does that have to do with this?"

"Mowgli, Shere Khan won't rest until you're gone or dead. And I can't be responsible for that. I'm sorry, little britches."

"But you said that.." Mowlgi said, before Bagheera said "well, we can't do anything now. It's getting late. I suggest we all should just spend the night here."

That night, the five all ate Baloo's food supply as fireflies filled the room, lighting up the cave. Baloo said "it's better than the Red Flower, huh Mowgli?"

"Yeah." Mowgli said. Baloo then hummed to himself, quietly singing  
\_ "well, when we start to move, hey honey, It ain't no joke...  
ba-dum-dum-de-dum-de-dum... We got a savage groove, we didn't learn  
from no human folk... ba-dum-dum-de-dum-de-dum... 'scuse our  
incivility, we're w-i-i-i-l-d!"\_

"What's that?" Grey asked curiously, Mowgli answering "that's a song, brother. Right Baloo?"

"Yep." Baloo answered. He added "You can forget about that Law of the Jungle nonsense. These are real songs." before whistling  
\_ "oooh-wo-hoo-wo-hoo-whi-wo-woo...woo-ho."\_

"Don't put that in his head." Bagheera said. "The Law of the Jungle is an important lesson. It's as old and as true as the sky. Like a creeper that girdles a tree trunk."

"I'm trying to stop 'em from dying of boredom!" Baloo laughed. As the moon rose in the crisp, dark sky, Raksha and Grey slept by Baloo and Bagheera, as Mowgli sat awake by the exit. He was confused by what to

do. Should I stay in the jungle, and endanger all of his friends and family, or should I go to the man-village and never see them again?

He got up and left the cave, walking out into the night.

Meanwhile, at the collapsed temple, the monkeys continued to search for their king. They moved a large rock out of the way and threw it aside. The rock suddenly scraped against another rock, creating a spark that fell onto a pile of wood underneath the rubble. As the wood came alight, a hand crawled from under the rocks and grabbed one of the flaming sticks. Observing the violent Red Flower, the creature smiled and said "yes... at last... the Red Flower is mine!"

## 12. Why Should You Run?

Mowgli walked for hours throughout the night-lit jungle. He waited on a small river, seeing four vultures observing him silently from a branch. One of the vultures looked at the others, before swooping down to where Mowgli was, dropping a small scrap of meat. Mowgli smiled at the vulture, who flew up back to the others as Mowgli ate the food and continued onwards.

Mowgli walked further into the jungle, eventually coming across a field of yellow grass before a large river. He sat on the grass to rest for a moment, before hearing a splash in the nearby river. Mowgli looked up to see something on the other side of the river.

It looked like a mancub, but it seemed to be female. The young girl was dressed in white and purple clothes, similar to the man in Kaa's vision, and she held a small jug in her hands. The girl stared at Mowgli for a while, before a loud horn was heard. It sounded like an elephant, but it was lower-pitched. Mowgli heard this, and ran back into the jungle as the girl went back the way she came.

Eventually, Mowgli arrived at a dark swamp-like place. The vine-covered oasis seemed to be made of individual caves of burnt stone. Each cave was covered in claw marks, which Mowgli examined carefully, not knowing that he was being watched.

As Mowgli looked at the claw marks, a voice said "a dangerous place for a mancub to be, isn't it?"

Mowgli turned to face the tiger who jumped down from the branch behind him and stalked towards him. Mowgli stared the tiger in his dead eye, as the tiger said "go ahead. Run."

"Why should I run?"

"Ha ha. Why should you run?" the tiger asked, clearly insulted.  
"Could it be possible that you don't know who I am?"

"I know you. You're Shere Khan."

"Yes, I am. Then I'm sure you'll also know that everyone runs from Shere Khan."

"I won't run from you. You made a deal with Bagheera."

Shere Khan looked in surprise, before saying "oh yes. Of course I did. I cannot dispose of you until sunset, can I?"

"No, you can't."

"Hm. Well, mancub. What do you suggest I do with you instead?"

"We could uh... we could talk."

"Talk? I've never been one for talking."

"Well, it is always good to try new things." Mowgli said as he sat down. Shere Khan slumped onto the ground, facing the man cub, as he said "so, where are you going to, mancub?"

"My friends tell me I need to go to a man-village."

"Well, I do not consider myself your friend nor you mine, but I would tell you the same thing, unless of course you simply do not wish to become a man, and I could just kill you."

"I wouldn't really like that, and I doubt my friends would either." Mowgli said. After thinking for a moment, he sighed and said "maybe it's better I go to the man village."

"Perhaps it is. You know, the one thing that spreads quicker than the Red Flower is word of mouth. I've heard about you, mancub, and your adventures. It seems you have quite a spirit and courage for one so small, and I suppose such spirit is deserving of my sympathies. So, even though I cannot kill you, my agreement mentioned nothing about not getting rid of you."

"How?"

"I will take you to the man-village myself. But for a price."

"I haven't had a good experience with people who say that last part. What is it?"

"If I take you to the man-village, you must promise to never return to the jungle. If you do, I will have to kill you, and every creature who tries to keep you from me."

Mowgli thought for a moment, and said "very well. I agree."

"Good. So, half a day remains of my deal, and the village is not too far away. Come."

Shere Khan walked out of the oasis, and Mowgli followed him further behind.

Meanwhile, back at Council Rock, Rama looked after the wolf cubs as Akela and two other wolves walked over. Rama said "did you find him?"

"No Rama. We've searched everywhere. We cannot find Grey. If we are lucky, then he may have found Raksha."

Rama said "alright... thank you, Akela." as he looked at some of the inventions Mowgli had made. Akela sighed and said "I'm sorry Rama.

But we couldn't let Mowgli stay here."

"I know." Rama said. Suddenly, a wolf sentry howled loudly, as Akela said "what is it?"

"Red Flower has been spotted nearby. We think it may be man."

"It cannot be Mowgli, can it?" Rama asked. "Here it comes!" one of the wolves said, as the Red Flower ripped through the branches. The Flower quickly set the den into flames, as Rama said "run!" as the cubs narrowly escaped.

Rama looked inside to see Mowgli's inventions in the cave, as he gave the cubs to Akela, saying "take care of them!" as he ran into the cave and grabbed the contraptions in his teeth.

As the animals ran for cover, the flames consumed their land. Eventually, all the animals in the area were cornered at the river, surrounded by chittering monkeys.

Rama said "Akela, what is going on!?" before he heard his cubs squealing. He turned and saw the monkeys threatening his cubs with the Red Flower, before he jumped forward to defend them. He snapped at the apes, saying "harm one of my cubs and I will tear you apart!" before leaping at one of the monkeys. His attack was intercepted by a flaming stick, which was thrown from a tree and hit Rama in the chest.

Akela turned and said "no!" as Rama fell smoldering to the ground. The cubs howled with tears in their eyes as they pushed and sat on their father's body. The rhinos said "what's going on!?" as a large shadow stepped out of the flames. The figure pointed to Rama's corpse, saying "this is what happen if you stand up to the Red Flower."

"Oh no." Akela said, as the shadow responded "This jungle is mine, now! HA HA HA HA HA!"

### 13. The Man-Village

Baloo, Bagheera, Raksha and Grey walked through the jungle. Baloo shouted "hey, little bitches? Are you out here, kid?" as Bagheera called out "MOWGLI! Where are you?"

"Where is he, Mama?" Grey asked Raksha, who said "I don't know, dear. But we must find him before Shere Khan. If that tiger has harmed my boy, I'll..."

Suddenly, a twig snapped in the bushes, as the four of them turned. Bagheera said "Mowgli, is that you?"

The leaves on the bush began to shake, as Baloo squinted. Suddenly, several monkeys burst from the bushes holding flaming twigs and sticks. The four of them were cornered by the monkeys, one of the apes saying "put them with the others! It's the mancub he wants!"

One of the monkeys pointed the stick at Grey, before Bagheera pulled the cub back and growled at the monkey. "Keep moving!" the leading

monkey said forcefully as the four of them were captured. Bagheera and Baloo looked at each other as Grey held close to his mother, while the monkeys led them back to Council Rock.

Meanwhile, Shere Khan walked through the jungle with Mowgli behind him, as he said "if you want to survive, I suggest you keep up, mancub. You'd better hope we get to that man-village before dark."

"Can I ask you a question?"

"No, not really."

"Why do you hate man so much?"

"Well, that's a rather hard question for me to answer, don't you think?"

"But why is it?"

"It's hard to answer because... it's not about hatred. It's about trust. Man cannot be trusted in this jungle."

"Why not?"

"You've met the ape, haven't you?"

"Louie. But he's dead."

"Yes, he is. But King Louie and the monkeys want to learn the secret of the Red Flower. I don't know why. An attempt to evolve, I presume but if they ever did, they could destroy the whole jungle if they wanted to. And what better way to find the secret than to manipulate a young, innocent cub?"

Mowgli sighed, as Shere Khan said "so you see, you cannot stay in this jungle."

When they passed a river, Mowgli said "what about your eye? What happened to it."

Shere Khan was about to answer, until he thought of the memory. The dark night. The flash of the Red Flower that the man singed his face with. The cub in the basket. He shook his head and said "I don't remember. But it was a long time ago."

"I just want you to know, I'd never do anything like that."

"You're a mancub. Of course you will one day. That's the law of man. The ones of the Red Flower survive and the rest are destroyed."

"Well, I say the strength of the pack is the wolf and the strength of the wolf is the pack, that's what Akela says. And I'll never stop saying it. If those monkeys ever learned how to make the Red Flower, then they can die with all who else breaks the rules."

Shere Khan thought to himself. Never had he thought he would see a mancub recite the Law of the Jungle.\_ Could it be that this boy doesn't belong with man? Is he truly one of us?" \_

As they walked, Mowgli told Shere Khan of his adventures, of his kidnapping by the monkeys and his encounter with Kaa. Shere Khan laughed and said "hmm. And you survived all of this? No man could ever survive that."

"Well, perhaps I'm not a man." Mowgli said, prompting them both to carry on in silence. Eventually, as the sun began to set, they reached a hilltop, and Shere Khan said "here we are."

Mowgli looked at the bottom of the hill, seeing a thick canopy of trees, and then he saw it. Small wooden houses with straw-thatched roofs: the man-village.

Mowgli turned to Shere Khan and said "you know, you're not quite what I expected."

"Hm. Neither are you. I will admit, I've rather enjoyed your company. I've never been one for long goodbyes but, it disappoints me that you have to be a mancub. Had you only been a true wolf, a true creature of the jungle. Why, you would have made a fine apprentice. So, goodbye, and good luck to you... um, Mowgli, is it?"

Suddenly, Shere Khan saw a man at the bottom gate aiming a barreled weapon, which fired smoke and steel at them. Both Mowgli and Shere Khan dodged the blast. As the dust settled, Mowgli turned to Shere Khan, who said "that shot was meant for me, not you. Go! NOW!"

Mowgli ran down the hill into the trees as Shere Khan returned to his lair. Mowgli trekked through the forest, as the man-village became more and more visible. He was inches away from leaving the bushes, when suddenly...

"HELP! SOMEONE HELP!"

A man ran out of the jungle, running across the stone steps to the gate. The girl Mowgli had seen earlier ran to the man, who fell into the arms of one of the villagers who said "what is it, man? What happened."

"There is fire in the jungle. All the animals are going mad."

Mowgli looked back at the jungle, seeing the smoke rising from the trees in the distance. A look of horror came to Mowgli's face. His wolf pack lived in that area, and they were in danger. Mowgli thought for a moment. It would be nightfall by the time he got there, and Shere Khan's deal would expire. But his friends were in trouble, and he had to help.

Mowgli looked one last time at the village, before running into the jungle.

#### 14. The King of the Jungle

Mowgli ran past the burning trees to Council Rock, where he saw the animals all gathered in a circle. He ran to the center of the circle, seeing Baloo, Bagheera and Raksha waiting for him. Raksha said "son. Oh, thank goodness."

Mowgli embraced Raksha and said "what's happening here?" before Bagheera answered "Mowgli, you must go at once! If Shere Khan finds out you're here, he'll kill you!"

"Where is father?" Mowgli asked, as Akela walked over and said "your father is... here." as the wolves pulled Rama's body over. Mowgli kneeled down, tears filling his eyes as he embraced his father's corpse. He got up, and said "who did this!?"

Bagheera was about to answer, when suddenly a loud, mighty roar shook the flaming trees. Shere Khan burst out of the Red Flower, saying "where is he!? Where is the mancub!?"

Raksha growled, before Mowgli stepped forward and faced Shere Khan. The tiger spotted Mowgli and said "YOU! I thought I told you to stay in the man-village!"

"I was going to, but..."

"But now you bring your Red Flower to destroy the whole jungle! I should have put you down the moment I saw you!"

"But I didn't..." Mowgli said, before the wolves stepped forward to defend him. Shere Khan growled in annoyance and said "you still risk yourselves for this murderer's life!? FINE THEN, if that's the case, I'll have you ALL in my teeth!"

Raksha and Akela ran towards Shere Khan, who slapped Akela aside as Raksha jumped onto his back and bit into the nape of his neck. Shere Khan growled as he rolled over, throwing Raksha off of him before striking her to the ground as he charged towards Mowgli.

He pounced at the mancub, Mowgli ducking as Shere Khan was suddenly tackled in mid-air. Bagheera and Shere Khan landed on the grass struggling, before Shere Khan threw Bagheera off of him and prepared to attack Mowgli. Bagheera pounced, grabbing the tiger from behind and pulling him down. The panther jumped over the tiger, stood in his path and said "enough!"

Shere Khan growled and swung at Bagheera, who ducked narrowly and said "you don't understand, Shere Khan! It's not the boy's fault!" before grabbing the both the tiger's paws as they both stood on their hind legs. Shere Khan pushed Bagheera back and swatted him to the ground.

The tiger said "it's time we put an end to this!" as he charged Mowgli again. Mowgli stood in fear, before hearing thundering footsteps behind himself. As Shere Khan leaped at Mowgli, Baloo got up on his hind legs and caught the tiger, spinning around to throw him away. Baloo said "the kid ain't responsible for this!"

"Do not insult my intelligence!" Shere Khan said. "There is none but man who can control the Red Flower! Now, out of my way, you big oaf!"

Baloo roared at Shere Khan as they charged to fight. Before they met in the middle, a nearby tree exploded into flames, surprising everyone as a shadow stepped out.

"NONE BUT MAN, YOU SAY? THEN HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN ME?" Louie said as he stepped from the tree, holding a branch of Red Flower.

"Louie!?" Mowgli said, before the ape answered "I'm no longer the king of swingers. Thanks to you, I'm the king of this whole jungle!"

Shere Khan roared as he charged Louie, only to be pushed back by the monkeys armed with flaming sticks. "Easy tiger, ha ha!" Louie laughed as he climbed onto Council Rock.

The monkeys surrounded the animals, forcing them all into the middle of the glade. Grey said "Mama, what do we do?"

"There's nothing we can do!" Akela said. "Not one of us is a match for the Red Flower."

Mowgli saw a burning branch, and his old contraptions next to Grey, before saying "maybe not, but I have a plan."

As the animals came closer to listen to Mowgli's idea, Bagheera turned to face Shere Khan, who was stood outside the group. After thinking for a moment, the tiger said "alright, if the mancub's plan will save us, then I will take part in it."

As Mowgli whispered his plan, Louie laid the branch upright in the rock, saying "I think it's time we established some new laws. Law number one: don't kill another animal. But if it's not an ape, then murder him if you wish. Law number two: all animals serve the monkeys now! And law number three: if..."

"Louie!" Mowgli called from the bottom of the rock. Louie looked down and said "oh, now you want my protection?"

"I want your crown, king!" Mowgli said as he plucked a flaming stick from the burning bush. "This is why the tiger was wise to want you in the man-village. Then I'd have no challengers!" Louie laughed as he grabbed his own branch and jumped down to face Mowgli.

Baloo, Bagheera and the others watched, Baloo saying "now?"

"No. Wait for the signal!" Bagheera said. Louie looked at Mowgli, saying "you really think you can hurt me, mancub. You wanna be a beast of the jungle? Then go ahead."

Mowgli stood silently as Louie leaned forward. Louie laughed and said "I knew you didn't! Ha ha ha-aaaarrggghhh!"

Louie screamed as Mowgli waved the Red Flower in his face, burning his orange hair. Louie looked at his burnt neck and at Mowgli, swatting the mancub to the ground as he said "you little hairless rat!"

As Mowgli got up and cleaned the blood from his face, he picked up his torch and looked at Louie. He turned to see the animals watching him, suspicious of the Flower he held in his hands. Mowgli turned to Louie, smiled, and threw the staff into the nearby river. Louie laughed and said "well, that was the stupidest thing you've ever done." before Mowgli said "I don't need the Red Flower. And I don't need to be king. All I need, is the Bare

Necessities!"

"RRRAAARRGGHHH!" Louie yelled as he knocked Mowgli down, saying "and for Law number three: if you stand up to me, your fate will be like the mancub's! Obey these laws of the jungle as a make an example of the child."

Louie turned to Mowgli and said "give up, kid. I've won. You have nothing now. No man. No fangs. No claws. No Red Flower. You're all alone!"

The ape was just about to kill Mowgli, when a voice said "this is the Law Of The Jungle!"

Louie turned to face Baloo, who smiled at Mowgli. Louie pointed the burning branch at the bear, saying "care to repeat that?"

\_ "This is the Law Of The Jungle." \_ Baloo said. \_ "As old and as true as the sky." \_

"What's this game you're playing?" Louie asked, before Bagheera joined in Baloo's words, as they said \_ "The wolf that shall keep it may prosper, but the wolf that shall break it must die." \_

"Is this a song rehearsal or something?" Louie laughed as Raksha joined in. \_ "As the creeper that girdles the tree trunk, the law runneth forward and back;" \_

Soon, all of the animals were reciting the law, as they said \_ "For the strength of the pack is the wolf, and the strength of the wolf is the pack." \_

"Oh, I get it." Louie said. "This is a mutiny, huh? Okay then. My soldiers, kill every single one of them! CHARGE!"

The monkeys grabbed their flaming torches as Baloo and Bagheera lead the army of jungle animals into battle. Baloo said "now THIS is really living!" as the final war began.

## 15. The Final Battle

As the two armies waged war against each other, flames set the dry grass alight as animals from both sides fell dead and unconscious. Mowgli ran up the rock and swung through the battle, as Louie said "get the boy! Right now!"

Several of the monkeys chased Mowgli into a chasm, only for rocks to roll in their path. Mowgli nodded at Grey, who said "go Mowgli!" as he jumped down and attacked the trapped monkeys.

Mowgli then swung up into the trees, where Louie's soldiers followed him through the burning branches. Mowgli grabbed onto a vine that hoisted him up, allowing the monkeys to land on the branch of a dead tree that fell into the flames.

Then the mancub landed on the ground as he was pursued by more monkeys, before water was poured onto their torches. As the birds dropped the water, the monkeys came face to face with Raksha, who said "run or die, you decide!" before fighting them.

Mowgli ran throughout the battle, past the wolves who ripped the monkeys apart and the hooved animals that trampled the remains. Eventually, he was cornered by a squadron of langurs, who grabbed Mowgli and carried him off. Suddenly, an echoing roar was heard as Shere Khan leaped down and swatted the monkeys aside, saying to Mowgli "hurry! You must get his branch! Disarm him!"

Mowgli nodded and crept up behind Louie. As he grabbed the branch of Red Flower, a voice said "oh, creeping up on people now, are we?" as Louie turned to face him. As Mowgli waved the branch, Louie said "you can't hurt me, mancub." before suddenly becoming dizzy as a rock hit him in the back of the head.

Louie fell from Council Rock, as Baloo said "but I can." before Bagheera added "and so can I. Mowgli, GO!"

Mowgli ran with the branch as Baloo and Bagheera fought Louie, Baloo pushing him back while Bagheera jumped on his shoulders and attacked his face. Louie said "enough!" as he pushed Baloo away and pulled Bagheera off. The panther stuck his claws onto Louie's head, clawing the ape's face before being thrown into a shallow river.

Mowgli saw this and said "Bagheera!", distracting Baloo long enough for Louie to swat the bear to the ground. "NO!" Mowgli said, before Akela jumped onto Louie and attacked the ape.

Mowgli held the branch as he prepared to attack Louie, before he was pushed to the ground and held down. "Get off! I need to fight him!" Mowgli told Shere Khan, who placed his paw on the boy's chest to keep him down. "You cannot fight him with the Red Flower."

"What do I do then?!"

"You fight him with the jungle. Now go! We will slow him down for you!" the tiger said as he released the boy, who ran off with the branch into the jungle. Louie then threw Akela to the ground, before Shere Khan pounced on the ape and knocked him to the ground. Bagheera climbed out of the river, before Louie picked up Shere Khan and threw him aside, causing him to crash into the panther and knock them both down.

Louie swung his fist at Council Rock, causing it to collapse and disintegrate as he ploughed through it in search of Mowgli, shouting "show yourself, coward!" before looking up and seeing a small, red light in the trees. "There you are."

Raksha attempted to block Louie's path, before the mighty ape swished her out of his way and followed the light into the jungle. Baloo, Bagheera and Shere Khan ran after Louie, before the ape pulled down the burning canopy into their paths. Shere Khan said "there's no way past."

"It's up to the kid now." Baloo said as they looked into the jungle. Meanwhile, Mowgli laid the burning branch in the ground as he heard hooves nearby. He finished tying two branches up to a rock and tree as he grabbed the branch. He ran back and waved the torch at Louie, saying "come and get me!" as he ran up a tree. He swung from vine to vine as Louie's hands ripped through the trees, trying to grab the boy.

Finally, the trees fell apart as Louie entered the canopy. He said "there is no escape, this time, mancub! It's a shame, you seem like a good kid. But I can't have any challengers to my throne, see? But you'll see. It's true, you know, that an ape like me can learn to be human, just like you!"

"I am no man." Mowgli said as he held the branch, before grabbing his homemade bowl and dipping the branch into it, extinguishing it instantly. "I AM MOWGLI, SON OF RAMA AND RAKSHA, AND THIS IS MY HOME!"

"RRRAAARRGGGHHH!" Louie shouted as he charged the man cub. Mowgli tugged on a vine to pull himself out of the way, dropping the branch near the vines as he left a puddle of honey in his place. Louie's feet made contact with the sticky substance, causing him to slip over and crash into a rock. Louie held onto the rock, for it was the only thing keeping him from falling into the ravine of stampeding buffalo. He turned to face Mowgli, saying "you're gonna have to do better than that, kid."

Suddenly, both their ears were filled with the sound of snapping vines, as the dead vines holding the rock to the tree were broken by Louie's weight. Louie scrambled to escape, reaching for Mowgli as the rock fell off the cliff and dragged him with it. Louie realized what was going to happen, turning to Mowgli and saying "well... this is inconvenient." as he was pulled screaming into the ravine.

Mowgli watched as Louie was dragged away by the buffalo into the foggy distance, never to be seen again.

After a while, Louie eventually found himself on a raft, floating through the streams to a fallen tree surrounded by fog. He got up, and said "where am I? Who's there?"

\_ "I am here. Your worshipfulnessss." \_ a voice hissed as vine-like coils wrapped around Louie's legs. Louie said "who is that?"

\_ "Just harmlessss little me." \_ Kaa said as she appeared to Louie.

\_ "You mussst be hungry.. your gracsssse. Caussse I'm sssstarved." \_

"I could eat. What's on the menu?" Louie said as Kaa dragged him with her coils into the fog. As they became invisible in the thick, black fog, Kaa's voice hissed\_ "oh, you'll love it. It's a meal fit for a king." \_

As the fog shrouded them both, Louie's voice said "wait, no, no no, what are you doing? No, no, that's not how you eat-I mean treat your king. No. No-no-no-wait a minute here. No! NAAAAAOOOOWWWWW!"

## 16. The Jungle Boy

As the flames raged on, the animals sat resting from their injuries. Baloo looked at Bagheera, who said "you stood your ground Baloo."

Baloo nodded, saying "do you think the kid's gonna be alright?"

"I only hope. What's that?" Bagheera said as he saw a shadow in the smoke. Raksha squinted, before smiling as she and Grey ran to embrace Mowgli. Mowgli hugged his brother and mother tightly, before turning to Baloo and Bagheera and hugging them as well. Bagheera said "you did it, mancub. You saved us all."

"No, I couldn't have done it without any of you guys." Mowgli said as he held them all close, Baloo laughing as he said "yeah, probably not."

Suddenly, a loud trumpet sound was heard. The trees fell down as the herd of elephants marched in. The lead elephant said "flower brigade, lads! To the river! Hup, two, three, four!"

The elephants walked to the river, where they used their trunks to slurp up the water, before walking to the trees and grass and spraying it on them. The other elephants pushed trees into the river, causing the bank to overflow onto the land and remove the Red Flower. As the flames were extinguished and the Peace Rock was exposed once again, the sun began to rise from behind the trees.

"Right face! Forward, march!" the lead elephant said as he lead his herd back into the jungle, as his mate said "Hathi dear, don't forget we need to take a rest soon. My feet are killing me."

"Silence in the ranks, Winifred. An elephant never forgets. I didn't get that Victoria Cross for nothing, you know!" Hathi answered as the herd disappeared into the jungle.

Mowgli and the other's smiled as the light of the sun overcame the smoke of the defeated Red Flower, before a voice then said "mancub." as Shere Khan walked towards them. Raksha growled as she stepped forward, before Mowgli said "no. I'll handle this." as he faced the tiger.

Mowgli said "I understand that I have disobeyed the agreement. I will face the consequences."

Shere Khan nodded, before saying "there will be no consequences, for it seems that you have proven me wrong, mancub."

"I have?"

"Yes, you have. I know who you are now, but you are no man. You are Mowgli, the son of Raksha of the pack of Akela. A creature of the jungle. May you always be welcomed here." Shere Khan said as he bowed towards Mowgli, prompting the other animals to do the same.

Mowgli bowed in return as the tiger walked off into the jungle. The wolves surrounded Mowgli, praising and welcoming him back, as Akela said "well done mancub. Rama would be so proud of you."

"Thank you, Akela." Mowgli nodded as the animals celebrated, for never before had there been such a time. When a cub, born of man and raised by wolf, had saved and united the jungle, for the very first time.

Later that day, Baloo and Bagheera walked through the jungle, Mowgli sitting on Baloo's back as the bear said "too bad you missed some of the action, Mowgli. I had old King Louie falling heads over heels, ha

ha! Isn't that right, Baggy?"

"Yes, I suppose it must be." Bagheera answered. Mowgli said "well, I'm so glad it's all over now."

"Yes siree, little britches." Baloo laughed. "Nothing and nobody's gonna come between you and this jungle again."

Suddenly, they heard the distinct sound of a horn being blown. Baloo said "what was that?" as Bagheera answered "come. It's best we leave."

Mowgli stepped off of Baloo's back as the horn became louder. Baloo said "Mowgli, don't go that way."

"That sound." Mowgli said. "I've heard it before."

Mowgli followed the sound to the bushes, when suddenly, a creature stepped out. It was a man, the same man Mowgli had seen in Kaa's vision. He looked at Mowgli silently as Bagheera and Baloo watched them both.

Baloo growled as he began to walk towards them, before Bagheera held him back. Raksha then leaped through the bushes, standing shocked as she saw Mowgli and the man.

The man smiled at Mowgli, as Mowgli thought of where he had seen the man before. They had never met, but he remembered him, from Kaa's vision. The man with the torch who attacked the mysterious shadow. Impossible he thought. This can't be him.

"Nathoo." the man said as he kneeled at Mowgli's level. Embracing the boy, he whispered "oh Nathoo, my son. It has been so long."

Bagheera and Baloo looked at each other and Raksha, who then watched as the man called into the forest "Messua! Shanti! Everyone! I have found him."

Within an instant, several men stepped out of the bushes, accompanied by two females. One was a grown woman, dressed in blue and white robes, while the other was the young girl Mowgli had seen earlier.

"That's him!" the girl said. "That's the jungle boy I saw."

One of the men, the hunter who had fired at Shere Khan, aimed his weapon at Mowgli and said "he is an animal. We should kill him!"

"No, Buldeo. Stop!" the first man said as the woman held Mowgli. "This is my son. Many years ago, I was attacked by a tiger, and I lost the boy. But somehow, he is saved, and returned to us."

"My son." the mother said as she embraced Mowgli. Raksha watched closely, tears in her eyes as the man said "come my son. We're taking you home."

"Mowgli, don't..." Baloo said. Mowgli turned as he was being taken away, before running back to embrace all three of them. Raksha whispered "please, Mowgli. Do not go."

"Don't worry." he said. "No matter where I go, or what they call me there, you will always be my family."

As Mowgli went back to the humans, Baloo tried his hardest to smile as he said "so long, little britches."

"So long... papa bear." Mowgli said, smiling as he turned to Bagheera and nodded, as the panther said "goodbye, mancub. Good luck."

The animals stood silently, watching as Mowgli took his parents' hands and was taken back into the jungle to the man-village.

"Well... he's hooked." Baloo said miserably. Raksha smiled and said "as long as he's safe, that's fine with me."

"I suppose it was inevitable." Bagheera said. "Besides, the boy is where he belongs, now."

"Yeah." Baloo nodded sadly. "I guess you're right. But you know, ha ha, I still think he'd have made one swell bear."

As they walked back into the jungle, Baloo walked slowly and silently, facing the ground. Raksha said "cheer up Baloo. Mowgli wouldn't have wanted to see you like it."

"I know. But I'm really gonna miss that kid."

"We all will." Bagheera said, before smiling and saying "so, I suggest we ought to get back to where we belong."

Saddened by seeing the bear so miserable, Bagheera said "come, old friend. This isn't your ways. You said so yourself. You just need to... look for the... bare necessities. The simple bare necessities."

Raksha smiled and pushed against Baloo playfully, saying "forget about... forget about..."

When Baloo didn't answer, Raksha and Bagheera looked at each other silently, before lowering their heads and walking onwards. Suddenly, a voice said "forget about your worries and your strife!"

Mowgli heard the singing from the trees behind him, smiling as he was led to his new home, while Baloo, Bagheera and Raksha walked off into the sunset, singing "I mean the... bare necessities, old mother nature's recipes, that bring the bare necessities of life!"

\*\*The End\*\*

End  
file.